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W. Richard Weagly
909 CANDLELIGHT PLACE 7635 Eads Ave., #201
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92037

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Dear Gene and Sunny:

It doesn't seem possible that we are so close to Christmas once again, and I made such a noble start on these greetings, before Thanksgiving, so that they would be on the way by now, but here I sit, still pecking away at notes. Anyhow, I hope to make most of the eastern ones by the end of the week, despite the fact that I am on top of my carol program Sunday at 3:30.

I have a gang of 2 boys(!) and 24 girls, which makes for an excellent balance but I'm not sure for just what, certainly not music. They have tried desperately hard to please the "dictator" and it may be the best program I have had here. Tho' the group is small, we are singing in 3-parts, some of it a capella, and all really very effective in pitch, rhythms, and tone, tho' volume is limited.

With our sunny and warm weather, and the lack of outdoor lighting(which I never cared for too much anyway) the feeling of Christmas is pretty absent. I saw Rhoda Van Dyke at our corner last Sunday(she belongs to the Presbyterian church just across from our apartment) and she looks fine and said she would be seeing me this Sunday. Anna and I talk of NYC from time to time, but have little feeling of homesickness. We thought we might make it back there for Christmas but gave it up when we returned from England in Sept,, being practically bankrupt. The cost of everything last summer was way beyond expectation and warning, and I don't know when or if ever we can go again. We looked at a few flats in London, deciding against any step at this time, and are we lucky to have done that, considering the frightful conditions in England now, as well as here in the states.

We thought we might venture to Yosemite and then across to San Fran. in the car, but as the gas crunch has increased, we have given that up, too, as everyone has. We have 2 plane tickets for Frisco for Dec. 27 to Jan. 2, hoping we can manage to get home.

The symphony has finally signed a new contract after 12 or 14 weeks of strike, so they will be playing a New Year's Eve "Viennese" concert which we will attend. Just being away from here for a week will make the holiday seem a little like Manhattan, tho' the weather up there has been mild, too, and will not be snowy or especially Christmassy.

I have been toying with the idea of finally retiring next June, seeing that I will be 65 in May but my doctor says I am insane to want to quit work, and I may listen to him. I would just like to be out from under the glee club and History courses, teaching only piano, but that may not be acceptable. I get no musical satisfaction from so poorly balanced a chorus, and there is so little interest in anything musical here, because of the outdoor type world we inhabit, that I am just putting in time to receive a check, which is not without its good points, of course. But, if I can retire and add just the amount allowable with Social Sec., I would manage very well. Of course, the payment of income taxes in Cal. for we lowly slaves must be pressed, in that the President has insufficient funds to pay anything!

We saw Fred Swann in Salzburg last summer and again in Hereford for the Three Choirs Festival, and he is pretty unhappy with things as they seem to be at Riverside, saying he may be out of a job himself, if things continue as they are. The colored population seems to increase but their support doesn't, so that finances are seriously in trouble. He wrote last week that the choir will probably be rehearsing before the morning service and immediately after the service, as the choir refuses to use gas to come into the city for a Thursday rehearsal. This eventually will limit and reduce the program even more, I suppose. Perhaps it will all go away!

Whenever my thoughts turn that direction, I seem to think of you and Florence and the Stimsons, etc. almost to the exclusion of everything else. I can't tell you how the 21 years I spent there have become a cherished and completely happy memory for me, and to have Anna to share it with is certainly one of the added blessings of having outlived all the bitter, and frustrating, and disappointing features. I saw Virgil's mother on Nov 10th, two days before she celebrated her 90th birthday and she is much the same as ten or more years ago. She talked much about him, and I did not have to ask any leading questions. He is much as you would expect!!! Love to all, Dick